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GRAY PARROT

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No. 137

THE GRAY PARROT

BY

W. W. JACOBS and CHARLES ROCK

ADAPTED FROM W. W. JACOB'S STORY
OF THAT TITLE

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(French's Minor Drama Continued on 3d page of Cover.)

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BY
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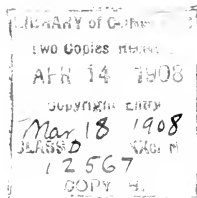
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THE GREY PARROT

Characters.

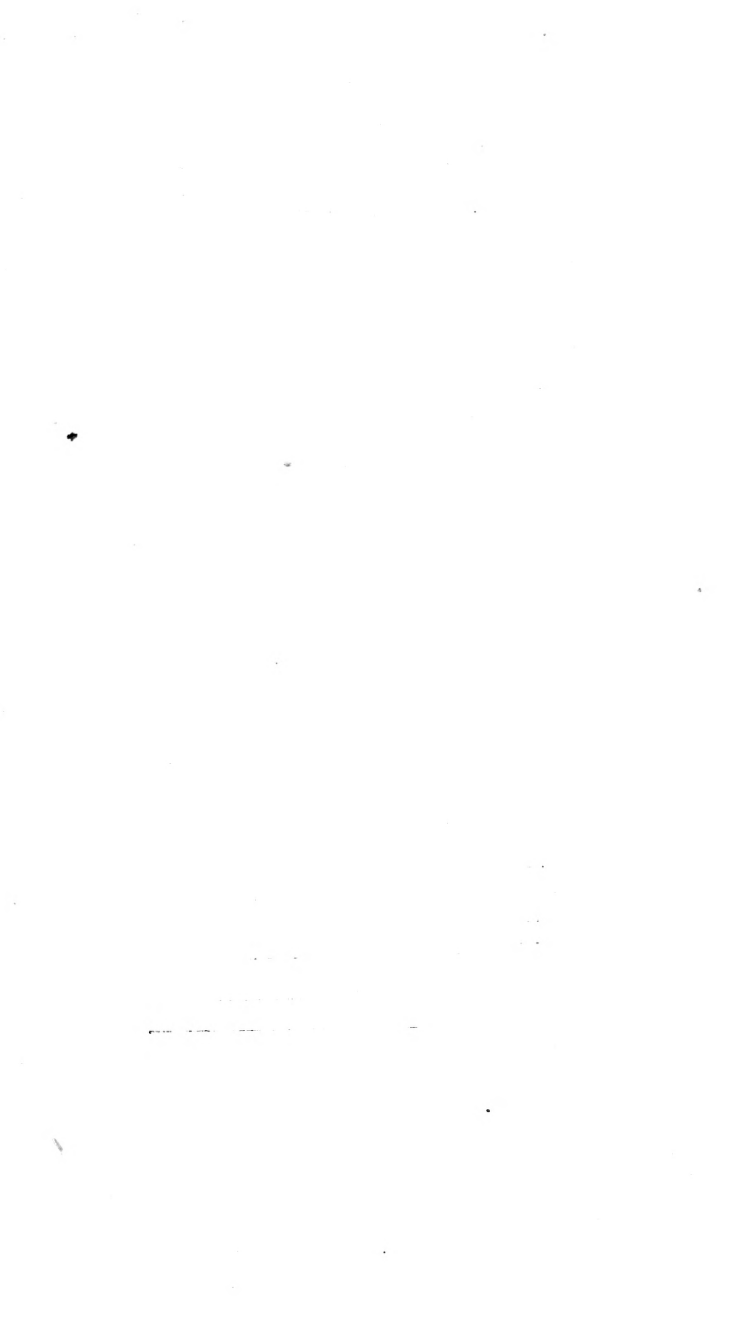
JIM GANNETT	}	About 30. Bronzed.
SAM ROGERS		Mates on S. S. Curlew Weather-beaten appearance, 50 years old.
HOBSON		A Publican.
P. C. 24		
MARY GANNETT.....		Gannett's wife.
JANE ROGERS.....		Rogers' wife.

Originally Produced, Devonshire Park Theatre, Nov. 2nd. 1899, for three performances.

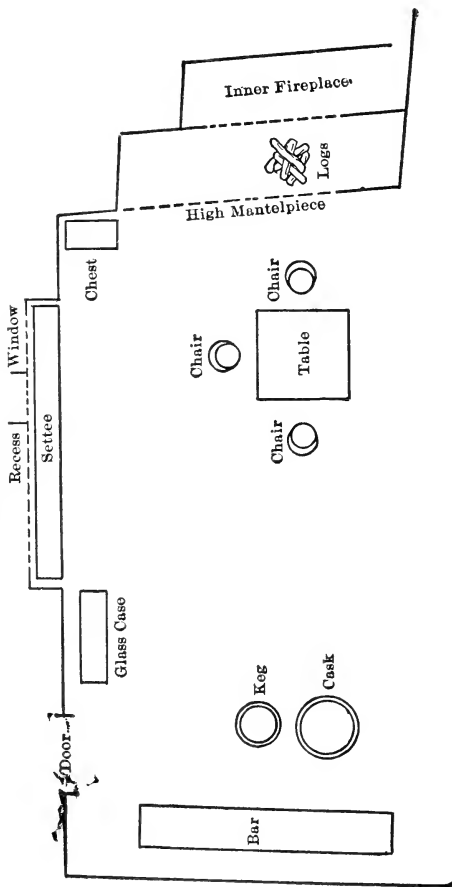
Strand Theatre, Nov. 6th, 1899—109 performances.

Cast at Strand Theatre.

JIM GANNETT.....	Charles Rock.
SAM ROGERS.....	Wilton Heriot.
HOBSON.....	George Shelton.
P. C. 24.....	Herbert Leonard.
MARY GANNETT.....	Miss Cybel Wynne— Mrs. Charles Rock.
JANE ROGERS.....	Miss Robertha Erskine.



Landscape Backing Sunrise



THE GREY PARROT.

*(As Curtain rises the sound of voices in argument heard off L. GANNETT and ROGERS pass window angrily arguing with P. C. 24, who follows them, HOBSON following after. Door R. C. is opened and GANNETT and ROGERS enter, the former carrying a parrot * in a large cage which is tied up in two red handkerchiefs and a brown paper parcel. P. C. 24 remains at the door. HOBSON remaining behind him, but in view of the audience.)*

P. C. 24. That's enough. That's enough.

JIM. Well, I couldn't help it, could I? I dropped the bird off the top of the 'bus, and it naturally gave vent to its feelings.

P. C. 24. I've told you if I hear any more such language, I shall hold you responsible.

JIM. You can do what you please, but you can't lock me up, because my parrot swears. Can he, Sam? *(Puts parrot on table in window L. C. and parcel on table down stage L. C., sits on R. of table.)*

SAM. In course not, never heard of such a thing. *(Sitting on head of sofa down R.)*

P. C. 24. I don't believe it was the parrot at all. It's my idea it was you up to some ventriloquism nonsense, chucking your own bad language into a poor innocent bird.

HOBSON. Well, in my opinion the Captain's quite right—there!

P. C. 24 *(to HOBSON)*. You mind your own business. Who's speaking to you?

* A stuffed Parrot.

HOBSON. I merely said in my opinion the Captain's quite right, and I stick to it. A man's at liberty to his opinion. The language you're so down on wasn't his at all, it was that wonderful bird's.

P. C. 24. Well, that's enough. All I can say is, I've warned you, and I shall send in a report to Headquarters.

(Goes off L.)

HOBSON *(calling after him)*. Headquarters! Rot! You go to the Parrot house at the Crystal Palace, and tell 'em that a parrot has arrived in England that can say something stronger than a common or garden Damn. *(Coming down to GANNETT and ROGERS.)* You'll excuse me, Captain, a interfering.

JIM. O' course.

HOBSON *(to ROGERS)*. An' you, mate?

SAM. Why, certainly, I ain't got the gift o' the gab myself, and it's a treat to hear any one talk to a bobby like you did.

HOBSON. Oh, that's nothing. But talking about talking, that parrot of yours is a beauty at it.

JIM. Yes, it can express itself pretty forcibly.

HOBSON. Express itself forcibly! Why, in my opinion, it's a word painter. You may believe me or not, but I can assure you in a thirty-two-years' experience in the 'public' line from pot-boy to boss, I never heard any one with a better command of language than that bird. I admire originality, and I admire that bird. Look 'ere, to prove I mean what I say, I'll give you a five pun' note for it.

JIM. Thanks, mate, but it's not for sale.

HOBSON. Well, look here, there's my card. *(Taking card out of waistcoat pocket.)* I'm only two streets away. My place is "The Dockers' Arms" so if you think better of it, send round and we'll deal. *(Hands card to JIM, who takes it.)*

JIM. Thanks all the same, but I don't mean to sell it.

HOBSON. All right, p'raps you'll change your mind. It's a mortal pity to keep a bird with such accomplishments in a small circle. In my opinion what it ought to have is publicity, and I can give it that. Good-day. Don't forget, a fiver!

JIM }
and } Good-day.
SAM }

(HOBSON *exits* D. R. C. to L.)

JIM. I wonder where the Missus can be. (*Goes to D. L. and calls.*) Mary! Mary!

SAM. Don't you worry about her, why she's probably out shopping, getting something tasty for your return. Five o'clock is when you were expected, and it's only three yet.

JIM. So it is, Sam, I brought that bird home as a present for my wife. The man I bought it of said it was a highly respectable bird, and wouldn't know a bad word when it heard it.

SAM. Well, I expect the character he gave the bird was as he found it. You'd probably say a word or two if you were dropped off a 'bus.

JIM. No doubt, but I couldn't help it, could I? That fool of a driver started his engines before I'd got down the companion-ladder.

SAM (*looking at cage*). Well, it's quiet enough now.

JIM. Oh yes, it'll keep quiet as long as it's covered up.

SAM. And not dropped off 'busses.

JIM. Oh, you shut up, you've too much humour you have. You know, Sam, I hardly like to give that bird to my wife after the swearing it indulged in.

SAM. Oh, it's no good being too particular, that's the worst of all you young married fellows. Seem to think your wife has got to be wrapped up in cotton wool.

JIM. Nothing of the sort. Only when you buy your wife a parrot to remind her of you when you're away,

and that parrot will insist on using the most awful language, it doesn't seem the right sort of present.

SAM. Ten chances to one she'll be amused.

JIM. Amused! I don't think any woman would be amused at that bird's language.

SAM. Then why don't you sell it to Hobson?

JIM. No fear. I bought that bird for a purpose. You've never met my wife yet, but when you do, you'll see she's pretty, and what I'm afraid of is that she'll get too much attention.

SAM. Well, women like that.

JIM. But I don't. When I think of it I go hot all over—boiling hot.

SAM. That won't last, you won't care tuppence this time next year.

JIM. Oh, won't I? Why, the day she came down to see me off, on this last trip, I saw the chap next door looking at her.

SAM. The man next door looked at her. (*Wildly.*) Good heavens!

JIM. I don't want any of your confounded impudence. (*Pause.*) He put his hat on straighter when he passed us, what do you think of that?

SAM (*gravely*). Can't say, it might mean anything.

JIM. If he gets up to any of his nonsense while I'm away, I'll punch his head. I shall know of it. I am going to ask the landlady to keep her weather eye open. You see my wife was brought up in the country, and she's very young and simple, so it's quite right and proper for her to have a motherly old body to look after her.

SAM. Are you going to tell your wife?

JIM. No! The fact is, Sam, my wife is very superstitious, and I've got a great scheme in my head about that bird.

SAM. A scheme. What do you mean?

JIM. Never you mind. But with that parrot and the landlady, I think I shall find out if I have any cause to be jealous.

SAM (*puzzled*). Well, I'm blowed if I understand you. Look here, old man, you take my advice and don't keep your wife so tight hauled. Let her run before the wind a bit. An old captain of mine used to say that a woman was like a battleship, no good until her compasses were adjusted. Well, I must be off or else the patience of Mrs. Rogers will be exhausted, and she'll be tacking down to the ship, to see if I am on the list of the missing. So long.

(*Exit SAM D. R. C. to R.*)

JIM. So long. (*To PARROT.*) Yes, you're a beauty, you are. Instead of being ashamed of yourself for using such language, I am blessed if you don't look quite conceited—and I expect you'd be still more stuck up if you knew that you were going to get the credit of giving me all the information I shall get from the landlady. (*At table c. opening parcel, disclosing work-box*). There, bless her heart, that's for her, and (*opening the box and taking out a bead necklace—Italian*) this too. I think it will please her.

(*During latter part of JIM'S speech MRS. GANNETT passes the window from L., and lifting the latch, comes in unheard by JIM. She's a bright, cheery, fresh little woman about 20. She carries a small basket with a few packages in it. The neck of a bottle showing, also a small bunch of flowers. Seeing JIM, she places these on sideboard R., and slyly comes down and puts her hands on JIM'S shoulders*).

MARY. Yes, I am sure it will.

JIM. Mary. Give me a kiss. (*Bus.*) Now let me put it on for you. (*Puts necklace round her neck.*)

MARY. You dear. I am glad to have you back.

JIM. That's right. Now see here—(*Showing box.*) That's for you.

MARY. Oh, Jim, how good of you, it's lovely. Now you sit in the armchair and see what I've got for you.

JIM. What, have you got a present for me?

(MARY goes to sofa R., and opens basket, and produces fancy cigar case filled with cigars and holds it up.)

Cigars! You dear! Why, I have had nothing but ship's baccy since I saw you last.

(MARY hands him case, and gets matches from mantel-piece.)

Why, Mary, how did you know how to choose cigars?

MARY. Oh, I chose the prettiest case.

(JIM looking dubiously at cigar.)

(As she lights it.) It is a good one, isn't it?

JIM (cheerily). Pulls like a rope.

MARY. There, now you old dear, you're comfortable, aren't you?

JIM. Rather! Hold on, there's something more for you. Look behind you.

(MARY turning and seeing parrot cage, runs over to it.)

MARY. Oh, Jim! (About to remove cover.)

JIM. No, don't uncover it. It'll start talking and swear——

MARY. Oh, Jim, does it swear?

JIM. Rather! I mean only a little. You see at first it'll find it strange being in a room, after boardship; I should only uncover it a bit at a time. Isn't it a beauty? Why, Hobson, of the Dockers' Arms offered me five pounds for it not ten minutes ago, and I refused it. I—I—I bought it to be company for you while I'm away.

MARY. You're too good to me, Jim. (Looks into cage, and suddenly draws back). Oh, Jim, it said something awful.

(JIM. Yes, it's a beautiful talker, and it's so clever that it picks up all the things it hears.

MARY. After what it's just said, I hope it's clever enough to drop some of them. Jim, it looks as though it knew what I had been saying.

JIM. Yes, and so it does. I didn't tell you before, but (*coughs*) that parrot's a Magic bird, at least that is the reputation it had with the people I bought it from. Why, it knows what people are doing even when it is nowhere near them, and it will always tell on being questioned.

MARY. But you don't believe such nonsense as that?

JIM. Yes, I do.

MARY. But how can it know, what *I'm* doing when *I'm* away.

JIM. Ah, that's its secret. A good many people would like to know that, but nobody has found it out yet. You'll find it's quite true. When I come back from my next trip, that bird will be able to tell me how you have been, and everything you've done during my absence.

MARY. Good gracious!

JIM. If you stay out after seven of an evening, or do anything else that I shouldn't like, that bird will tell me. It'll tell me who comes to see you.

MARY. Well, it won't have anything bad to tell of me unless it tells lies.

JIM. Ah, that's the best of that bird. It *can't* tell lies. (*Suddenly remembering.*) Here, I've got to get back to the ship again to meet Matheson the engineer. Something went wrong with the steering gear two days out, and it hasn't worked as smoothly as it ought, this last day or so.

MARY. Oh, Jim, you won't be long?

JIM. I shall be back in half an hour. Oh, by the way, have you seen anything of that fellow who stared at you so the day you came to see me off this last trip?

MARY. Of course I haven't, Jim. How can you ask me such a thing?

JIM. Well, you'd better be careful, because that parrot will tell me.

MARY. Why, Jim, you know in your heart I've never given you any cause to doubt me, now have I?

JIM. No, I don't think you ever have. But don't you do it.

MARY. Of course I never will.

JIM. Well, don't. Remember the parrot will know and I shall know. Good-bye.

MARY. Good-bye, Jim.

(Exit JIM D. R. C. to R.)

(half sobbing). Dear old Jim! I wish he'd understand he's all the world to me, but he won't, and now he's set that beast to watch me. It's a shame. (Upset.)

(A knock is heard at D. R. C., she takes no notice, it is repeated, and then MRS. GANNETT hears it, and rushes to glass over fireplace L. and wipes her eyes, then goes to D. R. C. opens it and discovers MRS. ROGERS, a stout cheery buxom woman of 45—also SAM ROGERS.)

Yes?

SAM. Excuse me, Mrs. Gannett, but is Jim in? I have a message for him from Matheson.

MARY. No, he's just gone down to the ship to see Mr. Matheson.

SAM (to MRS ROGERS). There now, we're too late. (To MRS. GANNETT.) I'm Sam Rogers. Your husband and me are mates. This is my missus.

MARY. Oh, I am very glad to see you both. Do come in, Jim's often talked of you, Mr. Rogers, he'll be back very soon, and then we'll have tea. You'd like a cup of tea, wouldn't you, Mrs. Rogers?

JANE. Thank you, my dear, I never say no to a cup of tea.

SAM. No more she don't. Why, she's a regular old cup o' tea herself.

JANE. Oh, go along with you, Sam. I'll have to send you to sea again.

SAM. Why, I've only just come back.

JANE. Well, behave, then. Sam, look at your pipe.

MARY. Oh, it's all right, he may smoke here.

JANE (*to* MRS. GANNETT). Husbands are a nuisance, aren't they, Mrs. Gannett?

MARY. Well, I am afraid I don't look upon Jim as a nuisance, except when he's jealous.

JANE. What, is Mr. Gannett jealous?

SAM. Jealous! Why, he's a green-eyed monster of the very deepest green.

MARY. Has he told you, Mr. Rogers?

SAM. Well, rather! You see we're mates and naturally talk things over together.

MARY. And are you jealous too?

SAM. Me, jealous? What, of my missus? No fear, bless her heart, she's a gem.

JANE. Sam, you be quiet.

MARY. I am sure you're a very happy couple.

JANE. You're right, my dear, we are; we understand one another—that's the great secret. I thought when I came in you had something worrying you. You'll excuse me, my dear, for saying it, but I like you, and if you'll let me, perhaps I can cheer you up a bit.

MARY. It's very good of you.

JANE. Not at all, my dear, you see when your husband's away, Sam's away with him. So why shouldn't I come round and keep you company. Perhaps Mr. Gannett would feel easier in his mind, though I am sure that he has no reason for jealousy.

MARY. Indeed no, I love him too dearly. Still there's no getting away from it, he's as jealous as he can be. Now, what do you think? Why, he's brought a parrot home to watch me.

JANE. A parrot to watch you?

MARY. Yes, there it is. It's a magic bird. He says that it's able to tell what people are doing even when they are nowhere near, and that it will tell him all about what I've done, where I've been and who's been to see me while he's away.

SAM (*aside*). So that was his scheme, was it?

JANE. What! You mean to tell me your husband said that?

MARY. Yes.

JANE. Sam, I wish you'd talk to me like that. I wish somebody would *persuade* you to talk to me like that. Only me.

SAM. No fear o' that, old girl. I know what's good for me.

MARY. Still it does show he's fond of me, doesn't it?

JANE. Well, it may be his way of showing it. But you surely don't believe it, do you?

MARY. Well, I—

JANE. My dear, it's all rubbish. I call it disgraceful for a husband to invent such a story to frighten his wife. I never heard of such a thing, I'd like to give Mr. Gannett a piece of my mind. Just half an hour of it. He wouldn't be the same man afterwards, I'd parrot him.

SAM. He wouldn't have a feather left.

JANE. Excuse me, my dear, getting so excited about it, but I can see you are a dear good little woman, and I feel indignant

MARY. Thank you so much. You've cheered me up.

JANE. That's right, my dear. I can tell you this, if my Sam brought me home a parrot, and told me such a fandango of nonsense about it, I'd have its neck wrung. There are enough mischief-makers in the world without *parrots* stepping in to help them.

SAM. I told him he'd better sell it. Why, Hobson of the Dockers' Arms offered him five pounds for it because of its swearing capabilities.

JANE. Oh, it swears too, does it?

MARY. Yes, I only heard one sentence, and then Jim said I'd better leave it covered up.

JANE. Have you heard it swear, Sam?

SAM. Rather! Why, Gannett dropped it off the 'bus and the language that bird used was awful.

JANE. Well, I think if I were you, my dear, I should sell it to Hobson.

MARY. Oh, I daren't. Why, what would Jim say?

SAM. Well, even if he swears he couldn't beat the parrot.

JANE. Mrs. Gannett, I've got an idea—I think I know a way to cure your husband of jealousy, and get rid of the parrot at the same time.

MARY. Oh, if you only could, Mrs. Rogers, I should be so grateful, but I'm sure Jim won't part with the bird.

JANE. Just wait and see, dear. Doesn't it strike you that if that parrot is so clever as to be able to tell Mr. Gannett all you do, it might be clever enough to tell you all that Mr. Gannett *has* done?

SAM. Well, I'm blowed, I never thought o' that.

MARY. But how are we going to find out the way to make it tell us?

JANE. There's no need for that. I've got a parrot of my own.

SAM. Eh?

JANE. Yes, a green one.

SAM. Where?

JANE (*scratching SAM's head*). Pretty Poll!

SAM. Here—look here, now—

JANE (*laughingly*). And he's a very valuable bird, too. Why, I wouldn't part with him for all the world. Yes, Sam, you're the parrot that shall tell us.

SAM. Me? Why, how do you mean?

JANE. Well, now, hasn't Mr. Gannett got into any little scrapes during this last trip? Harmless ones, I dare say, but still sufficient perhaps to make a woman—a jealous woman—jealous.

SAM. Oh, come now, that would be telling.

JANE. Yes, perhaps it would, but don't you think you could give Mrs. Gannet a hint, of say a couple of little sprees, the sort of sprees you sailors are always having. She won't say she heard of them from you. She'll say the parrot told her and Mr. Gannett need never know otherwise.

SAM (*as the idea is dawning upon him, roaring with*

laughter). Ha, ha, splendid! Why, of course I can. Look here, Mrs. Gannett, you talk to him about his visit to the concert gardens at Genoa where he got three parts half sprung and smashed a little marble-topped table, and knocked down two waiters, and how if it hadn't been for the Captain of the "Pursuit," who happened to be there, and got him away, he'd have been locked up. Yes, and about the girl at the fruit stall at Naples, and how on the strength of having bought three pen'orth of green figs from her, he put his arm round her waist, and tried to kiss her, and how her sweetheart, who was standing by, tried to stab him, and about his being in such a state of funk, he jumped into the harbour and was nearly drowned, and again at Suez——

JANE (*primly*). That's quite enough to go on with, thank you, Sam.

SAM. Oh, but I must tell you about Suez.

JANE. That'll *do*, Sam!

SAM. Oh, but it was the funniest thing.

JANE (*imperatively*). Sam!

SAM. My love, you don't know what you're missing.

JANE. That's quite enough, Sam. Don't you think so, my dear?

MARY. Yes, I am half afraid, but I'll try it when he comes back. But oh, Mr. Rogers, he wasn't seriously in love with her, was he?

SAM. No fear, he was only jollying. Why, lor' bless you, do you think I should have told you, if there had been any harm in it?

MARY. Thank you, Mrs. Rogers, I think I see my way. Yes, I'll take your advice and sell the parrot. That is, if you'll do something else for me.

JANE. Certainly, my dear, eh, Sam?

SAM. Of course we will, what is it?

MARY. Well, whilst I finish getting tea ready, will you both go round to the Dockers' Arms and tell Mr. Hobson to send for the bird?

JANE. That's right, my dear, don't you be put upon. It'll all come right if you show spirit enough.

MARY. Oh, I've made up my mind about it. I hope Jim will see I'm right.

JANE. Of course he will, my dear.

(JANE and SAM going towards door R. C.)

MARY. Oh, would you mind going out the back way in case Jim sees you? I expect him back every minute. He mustn't suspect that I got to know of his doings from any one but the parrot.

JANE. Certainly not.

(JANE exits.)

SAM (*pointing to parrot*). That parrot mind.—(*Pointing to himself*.) Not this parrot. (*At door L.*) Oh, Mrs. Gannet, I should like to tell you what happened at Suez.

JANE (*very shortly*). Sam!

SAM. All right, my love. Coming.

(Exit L.)

MARY. I'm afraid I shall find it very hard to talk to Jim, but (*to parrot*) if I can only get rid of you, you horrid bird, I shall feel happier.

(MR. GANNETT enters, D. R. C.)

JIM. Well, my dear, here I am again. (*Kisses her*.) Matheson had gone about the steering gear when I got down to the boat, so I had my trip for nothing. Ha, it's good to be home again. Well, how do you like the parrot?

MARY. Not at all. In fact, Jim dear, I've accepted Mr. Hobson's offer for that bird.

JIM. What do you mean?

MARY. Yes, dear, £5.

JIM. But you're not to sell it. I didn't give it to you to sell.

MARY. Well, Jim, I shall poison it. It's a beast.

Besides, I don't like it, Jim. I don't like the idea of its watching me always. You see it might make no end of mischief by not telling the truth.

JIM. That bird couldn't tell a lie if it tried to.

(*A knock heard* D. R. C. MRS. GANNETT, *goes to door and opens it.* HOBSON *discovered.*)

HOBSON. Good afternoon. I've come for that parrot.

JIM. Well, you can't have it, it's not for sale.

MARY. If you'll just wait a minute, Mr. Hobson, I think you'll find it is for sale. Jim, if you don't let me sell that bird, I shall go home to mother. It's not truthful.

JIM. Not truthful!

MARY. No, it's been telling me things about you.

JIM. About me! Telling things about me?

HOBSON. Here, am I going to have that bird, or am I not?

JIM. No!

MARY. Please wait, Mr. Hobson.

HOBSON. All right.

MARY. Jim, there's more magic about that bird than you thought. It has been saying such shocking things about you, I couldn't bear it. And as you say it can't tell lies I don't know what to think.

JIM. Things about me! Do you think you're talking to a child? I should like to hear some of them if you can remember them. (*Sneeringly.*)

HOBSON. Am I in the way?

MARY. The first thing it told me was about the time you were at Genoa. The parrot said you were at some concert gardens, but I don't suppose there is such a place there.

JIM (*feebly*). I believe there is—I—I've heard our chaps talk about it.

MARY. But you haven't been there. Have you, Jim?

JIM (*emphatically*). Never!

MARY. That wicked bird said you got intoxicated there.

HOBSON. Hullo, this is in my line.

MARY. And that you smashed a little marble-topped table, and knocked down two waiters, and that if it had not been for the Captain of the "Pursuit," who was there at the time, and who got you away, you'd have been locked up. Wasn't it a wicked bird?

JIM. Horrible! Shocking!

HOBSON. In my opinion it's a genius.

MARY. I don't suppose there ever was a ship called the "Pursuit."

JIM. Doesn't sound like a ship's name.

HOBSON (*much impressed*). If the parrot said there was, you can bet it is all right.

MARY. Well then, a few days later it said, your ship was at Naples.

JIM. I never went ashore all the time we were at Naples.

MARY. The parrot said you did.

JIM (*starting up*). I suppose you'll believe your own lawful husband before that—(*just going to say d—*) bird?

HOBSON. Well, in my opinion it's a very clever bird.

JIM. Oh, you shut up.

HOBSON. Well, I merely remarked that in my opinion——

JIM. Well, you keep your opinions to yourself.

HOBSON. All right.

JIM (*to MARY*). I ask you, are you going to believe that bird before your husband?

MARY. Of course I don't believe it, Jim, I'm trying to prove to you that the bird is not truthful, but you're so hard to persuade. Was there a girl who kept a fruit stall just by the harbour?

JIM (*gazing restlessly in direction of cage*). How should I know?

MARY. Well, the parrot said there was, and that one evening on the strength of having bought three pen'-

orth of green figs from her, you put your arm around her waist and tried to kiss her, and her sweetheart who was standing by, was going to stab you; to escape him you jumped into the harbour and were nearly drowned. Then again, the bird said that when you were at Suez——

JIM. That'll do.

MARY. I am sure I don't want to have to repeat it, but it said that when you were at Suez——

JIM. That'll do. (*Bus.*)

HOBSON (*softly*). Suez! Is that where the Canal is?

JIM. Here, Hobson, hand over that fiver and take that—that—(*Choke*) beast away.

HOBSON. *Beast!* In my opinion it's a marvel.

JIM. Well, on this occasion you are at liberty to your opinion.

HOBSON. Well, I never parted with £5 more readily in all my life. I can tell you, Mr. Gannett, that the jealousy this bird will create amongst my customers will be enormous. Some of 'em flatters themselves on their command of what they calls their mother tongue, but I can see their faces blushing at their incompetence when this 'ere bird once gets fairly started. Come along, my professor of elocution.

(*Exits with parrot D. R. C. to R.*)

MARY. Now you see why I wanted to get rid of that bird, don't you, Jim? You're so jealous that if it had told you untruths about *me*, *you* would have believed them, wouldn't you?

JIM (*taking MARY in his arms*). No, my dear, I wouldn't. Look here, Mary, I promise you I'll never be jealous again.

MARY. And I did quite right to sell it, didn't I, Jim?

JIM. Quite right. (*Giving her the £5 note*). And you buy something that won't talk.

MARY. I will, Jim dear.

(Knocks heard D. R. C. JIM opens door discovering MR. and MRS. ROGERS.)

SAM. Well, here we are back again, Mrs. Gannett. Jim, this is my wife.

JIM. How d'ye do. Come in, we're just going to have a cup of tea. Why, Sam, I didn't know you knew Mrs. Gannett.

SAM. Well, I didn't till this afternoon. But me and my wife came round with Matheson's message and Mrs. Gannett kindly asked us in to tea.

MARY. O yes, I forgot to tell you about it, Jim dear,

JIM. Oh! You. You've been here before have you? *(Truth dawning on him, to SAM meaningly.)* Sam, do you know what I'd like to do to you?

SAM *(with affected innocence)*. Eh! Me! No-o-o-o!

JIM *(meaningly)*. Drop you off the top of a 'bus. *(SAM starts and edges away—JIM follows him up.)* Pull your tail feathers out, and then wring your neck. *(Laughingly.)*

SAM *(innocently and questioningly)*. Like a bird?

JIM. Yes, like a bird!

MARY. Jim dear—I felt like doing that to "The Grey Parrot."

(All sit down to tea-table.)

CURTAIN.

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